NINTY_SEVEN YEARS.

Eli St.Clair Reaches That Age and Celebrates His Birthday Yesterday.

A Histort of an Old Settler Now Living at Fort Harrison.

The Old Gentleman Not so Spry as John Dawson.

Yesterday Eli St.Clair attained the rare old age of ninty-seven years and celebrated the anniversary of his birth in a quiet manner surrounded bt several of his children, a number of grandchildren and a circle of friends at the residence of his second daughter Mrs. Mary Smock, which is situated on that old historic spot known as Fort Harrison.

The venerable old gentleman has been in declining health for the past few years and yesterday when the wrighter called at the little cottage almost on the banks of the flowing Wabash, Mr. St.Clair was in bed suffering from a sever spell of sickness. His daughter awakened him and with the aid of pillows propped him up in bed. When he was finally made to understand that a visitor had called on him he appeared delighted and extending his hand gave the writer a warm shake.

The old gentleman's hearing is greatly impaired and the difficulty that was encountered in attempting to hold an intelligent conversation with him can be imagined. His memory too is poor and he has but a very indistinct recollection of the earlier events of his life. The old gentleman has a very interesting history were he in a condition to relate it.

Mr. St.Clair was asked the date of his birth and after a considerable period of meditation he answered the question and stated that he was born March 27, 1794. His birth place was in Cessick, Co. Sussex Delaware, where his parents had resided for some years previous to his birth. He has but a faint recollection of his parents but had previously said that his father served with distinction in the revolutionary war. When but a babe of seven months his parents removed to Pennsylvania on the banks of the Mongahelia river. The family didn't remain long in the Quaker state but soon commenced a long journey to Kentucky, settling at a small place called Hardensburg. The subject of this sketch was then a boy of perhaps six years and was reared in the Kentucky backwoods with his parents until 1812, when at the early age of eighteen years, he was married to Miss Fannie Siner, who was also in her teens and at that time was not quite fifteen. It was customary at that time for persons to get married at very early ages. Two children came to make his home more cheerful and he remained in the bluegrass state for several years. The St.Clair family decided to locate in Indiana and after a long trip they settled in Sullivan county near Carlyle. It was while living there that his parents were taken sick and dparted to join the silent majority. In 1838 Eli St.Clair with a family of twelve children came to Terre Haute and took up his abode in "Old Johnny" Burtons log cabin which was then the identical spot where the well

in woodlawn Cemetery now stands. The place was not then used as a burying ground,,the cemetery being directly south of the house. It was not thepleasantest spot in the world on which to reside but the St.Clair family was made of softer material than to give heed to the gloomy white tooms within a stone's throw of their door. He stayed in Terre Hautefor a few years and then with his wife and several children started for Minnesota,first going to Vincennes where he procured of General Harrison, who was Land agent, a tract of land from the government. He settled in Minnesota and commenced farming.

A SETTLEMENT SOON SPRUNG UP.

As MR. St.Clair was the first to settle there the place was named in his honor,"St.Clair's Bluff". It has retained this name th the present day and what was then a small settlement of a few families is now a thriving city of serveral thousand inhabitants.

The crop season being of such short duration in the northwest, he became dissatisfied and came to the correct conclusion that Terre Haute was the best spot on nature's green sod and he settled with his family in Honey Creek township and has lived in and around Terre Haute ever since.

While in Kentucky Mr. St.Clair was a close neighbor and intimate friend of the world renowned Daniel Boone and his brother George. Many pleasant days did they spend together and many perils did they face together in the backwoods of Kentucky, and it was a cause of mutual regret when they separated. While not as famous as Boon as a hunter, Mr. ST.Clair was no Slouch at that art and could MAKE A BEAR LIE DOWN in his tracks with the best of them. He keenly enjoyed deer hunting and many times he wandered off on horseback alone in search of this favorite game. He seldom returned home empty handed But an unlooked for circumstance happened on one of his lone hunting expeditions which caused him to break the record in this respect. He han slain a deer and after cutting off the choice morsels of meat and packing t on his horse's back he started homeward anticipating a meal of venison steak. He had not proceeded far when his horse, which never showed signs of alarm without cause suddenly stopped under a tree and commenced to shy, The rider was at a loss to account for the strange behavior of his horse untill out from under the thick branches of the tree above him leaped a panther which sprang upon the horse and pulled the deer meat to the ground. Mr. St.Clair had a narrow escape from being torn to pieces by the ferocious animal.

Mr. St.Clair has had quite a varied experience, having been at different times a farmer, carpentr, river pilot and well digger. During the earlier days he was an old flat boat pilot running between Terre Haute and New Orleans. He was engaged in that capacity by Jim Johnston then a store keeper on Main street. One trip that the old gentleman particularly remembers was when Johnston turned over a cargo to him and told him to go south with it and sell it.Arriving at New Orleans he disposed of the cargo to good advantage and received$1,000 in a SOLID CHUNCK OF GOLD. He placed the gold in a sack and thensewed the latter to his shirt and it was never seen from the yime it was given him until he had turnd it over to Johnston. He has made between fifty and sixty trips on the river.

It was while he was in Sullivan county that the Indians were so bad and while not taking an active part in the battles he has seen stirring times. He was near at hand at the battle of Tippecanoe and recalls

the fact that he went out on the field after thebattle had ceased and picked up a man's thigh bone. While living at Sullivan county, Mr. St.Clair accompanied by Col. Ledgerwood, setout on foot for Chicago. They had the distinction of being the mento nail down the floor in the FIRST COUTR HOUSE of that city. The old gentleman spoke as follows yesterday concerning this: Sombody, I forget who, had built the court house and got it pretty near through when something happened that caused them to cease work and they wouldn't finish it. The planks were all dressed and stacked in the house when Col. Ledgerwood secured the contract and I helped him put it down." Mr. St.Clair also assisted in laying out a street in Chicago but couldn't recall the name of the THOROUGHFare.

When Mr. ST.Clair came to Terre Haute there was but onestore in the placenand that was located on First Street where Parker's foundry now is. He has seen Tere Haute grow up into a large city, has seen the corn fields and woods disappear to make room for the buildings. Since a resident of this city he has mada his living by digging wells. This is a dangerous vocation and the old gentleman to this day carries scars regeived while working in well.

Mr. St.Clais's children with the exception of one boy, who was accidently drowned at Honey Creek when he was twenty years of age, were all living untill five years ago when they commenced to depart for the eternal world.He still has eight children living who are as follows: Mrs. Cornelias Smock, who resides at Fort Harrison, Mrs. George Albin, South of town, Mrs. Emma Sutliff, of Honey Creek, Wm.J. St.Clair of Sydney, Neb., Benjamin St.Clair of this city, Mrs. J. L. Jordan of Chicago, at present with her aged parent, Richard St.Clair of KansesnCity. Mr. ST.Clair has grandchildren and great grandchildre n innumerable and it would be useless to attempt to name them all.

Mr. St.Clair until a few years ago was in the best of health butof late years he has been failing rapidly. He took great pride in saying that he had raised his family and had to buy only $2.50 worth of medicine. He generally cured his aches and pains by using roots and herbs. When standing erect he is over six feet tall and despite the fact that he is in poor health he still weighs about 170 pounds. His weight is beginning to decreasa and noon better than he realizes the fact that he has but a short time more in this life. As the wpiter shook hands with him before departing the old gentleman manefested considerable emotion said: "Take care of yourself, my boy. We may never meet again."

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Community Affairs File

BIOGRAPHY - ST. CLAIR, ELI

ELI ST. CLAIR.

He Will Celebrate His Ninety-Eighth Birthday Tomorrow.

A Sketch of the Third Oldest Person in the City.

The Old Gentleman Resides on South Fifth Street With His Daughter.

Gazette Sat Mch 26/92

TOMORROW Eli St. Clair will have reached his 98th birthday, an age seldom allotted to man nowadays. Excepting John Dawson, Aunty Baldy and a colored woman who is an inmate at the poor farm, Mr. St. Clair is undoubtedly the oldest person in this city or vicinity.

The venerable old gentleman resides with his sister, Mrs. Cynthia St. Clair at 1328 south Fifth street. This time last year he was living with relatives at the Smock homestead at Fort Harrison.

Mr. St. Clair has been in poor health for several years past and this fact will prevent any celebration or family reunion that might have been held.

Time has left its imprint upon the old gentleman and at present his faculties are greatly impaired and it is almost impossible to carry on a conversation with him.

ELI ST. CLAIR.

Mr. St. Clair was born March 27th, 1794. His birthplace was in Cessick county, Delaware, where his parents had resided for some years previous to his birth. He has but a faint recollection of his parents, but had previously said that his father served with distinction in the revolutionary war. When but a babe of seven months his parents moved to Pennsylvania on the banks of the Mongahela river. The family didn't remain long in the Quaker state but soon commenced a long journey to Kentucky, settling at a small place called Hardensburg. The subject of this sketch was then a boy of perhaps six years and was reared in the Kentucky backwoods with his parents until 1812, when, at the early age of eighteen years, he was married to Miss Fannie Siner, who was also in her teens and at the time was not quite fifteen. It was customary at that time for persons to get married at very early ages. Two children came to make his Kentucky home more cheerful and he remained in the blue grass state for several years. The St. Clair family decided to locate in Indiana and after a long trip they settled in Sullivan county near Carlyle. It was while living there that his parents were taken sick and departed to join the silent majority. In 1838 Eli St. Clair with a family of twelve children came to Terre Haute and took up his abode in "Old Johnny" Burton's log cabin which was then on the identical spot where the well in Woodlawn cemetery now stands. The place was not then used as a burying ground, the cemetery being directly south of the house. It was not the pleasantest spot in the world on which to reside but the St. Clair family was made of solider material than to give heed to the gloomy white tombs within a stone's throw of their door. He stayed in Terre Haute for a few years and then with his wife and several children started for Minnesota, first going to Vincennes where he procured of General Harrison, who was land agent, a tract of land from the government. He settled in Minnesota and commenced farming.

A settlement soon sprung up and as Mr. St. Clair had been the first to settle there the place was named

ST. CLAIR'S BLUFF.

It has retained that name to the present day and what was then a small settlement is now a thriving city of several thousand inhabitants.

He remained in the northwest only a few years when he started back to Indiana and with his family settled in Honey Creek township and has lived in and around Terre Haute ever since.

While in Kentucky Mr. St. Clair was a neighbor and intimate friend of the world-renowned Daniel Boone and his brother George. They spent many happy days together hunting, and Mr. St. Clair soon became quite an expert with the gun.

During the early days Mr. St. Clair served as pilot on numerous flat boats running between Terre Haute and New Orleans. At one time his employer turned over a valuable cargo to him with instructions to go south and sell it. Arriving at New Orleans he disposed of the cargo to good advantage and received in pay a solid chunk of gold worth $1,600.

When the old gentlemen came to Terre Haute there was but one store in the town, that being on south First street where Parker's foundry now stands.

Mr. St. Clair's children with the exception of one son, who was accidentally drowned at Honey Creek when twenty years old, were all living until six years ago when they commenced departing for the eternal world. He still has eight children living, their names being as follows: Mrs. Cornelian Smock, of Ft. Harrison; Mrs. Carico, of south Fifth street; Mrs. George Albin, living south of the city; Mrs. Emma Sutliff, of Honey Creek, Wm. St. Clair, of Sydney, Neb.; Benjamin St. Clair, of this city; Mrs. J. L. Jordon of Chicago; Richard Lane St. Clair, of Kansas City. The old gentlemen has grand children and great grand children innumerable.

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